

February 4, 2010

Luján Added Amendment in Committee to Help Tribal Communities, Encourage Students to Study Cybersecurity

Washington, DC – Today, Rep. Ben Ray Luján voted to pass the Cybersecurity Enhancement Act of 2009, which will improve the security of cyberspace by supporting research on innovative, transformative technologies and ensuring federal investments in cybersecurity are more focused and effective. When the legislation was in the House Committee on Science and Technology, Rep. Luján added an amendment to address disparities in the Federal Cyber Scholarship for Service Program and help tribal communities protect themselves from cyber criminals. The legislation passed the House by a vote of 422 to 5.

“More and more Americans rely on the internet for their day to day activities,” said Rep. Luján. “Families buy clothing, groceries and even homes online. People network in hopes of finding a job or connecting with friends. This means that every day more people rely on secure networks to keep their personal information safe. The Cybersecurity Enhancement Act legislation will help make our experience online safer and more secure.”

Rep. Luján's amendment addresses any potential regional disparities in the Federal Cyber Scholarship for Service Program, providing local companies, organizations and government agencies in New Mexico and throughout the southwest with access to locally trained talent. His

amendment will also help to educate tribal communities about the risks of cyber attacks and how they can keep themselves safe from cyber criminals.

“Because of our increasing dependence on technology, we must teach students the skills to stay one step ahead of cyber criminals,” said Rep. Luján. “One provision in the legislation we’re debating today will help train this force by establishing the Federal Cyber Scholarship for Service Program. During committee mark up, I successfully included an amendment to address any potential regional disparities in the Federal Cyber Scholarship for Service Program. My amendment will make sure that rural states, like New Mexico, will be able to match locally trained cybersecurity talent with local companies, organizations and government agencies.

As tribal communities establish internet networks, they are at risk of being disproportionately impacted by cyber criminals,” said Rep. Luján. “It is critically important to make sure that they are prepared as these networks are established. My amendment also helps to educate tribal communities about the risks of cyber attacks and how they can keep themselves safe from cyber criminals. This will help ensure an important population is not left behind as they move into the digital age.

The Cybersecurity Enhancement Act of 2009 reauthorizes and expands the Cyber Security Research and Development Act (P.L. 107-305) passed by the Committee on Science and Technology in 2002. In addition to promoting cybersecurity research and development, the legislation addresses cybersecurity workforce concerns and advances the development of technical standards.